

When facing abdominal pain, don't forget ACNES !

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INTRODUCTION

Abdominal pain is a frequent complaint in adolescence. Anterior cutaneous nerve entrapment syndrome (ACNES) is insufficiently known and therefore underdiagnosed.

CLINICAL CASES

12-year-old presenting with a **very localized pain** in the upper left quadrant with nocturnal awakening. She had multiple consultations in the emergency department, 2 hospitalizations, 3 normal abdominal ultrasound and multiple visits with specialists (gastroentérologist, gynecologist, infectiologist, nephrologist) without further explanation for the pain. She was treated with laxatives and different pain killers. Finally, an **infiltration of lidocaine** alleviated the pain.

15-year-old presenting with abdominal pain, diminished appetite and loss of 1kg in a week. Physical examination showed a **very localized pain** in lower right quadrant, **positive pinching test** and **positive Carnett's sign**. The urine and blood test and abdominal ultrasound all returned normal. She had a **lidocain infiltration** followed with a **neurectomy** because of refractory pain.

DISCUSSION

CAUSE: entrapment of the terminal thoracic nerve branches, **T7-T12**, passing through the **anterior rectus muscle fascia** and responsible for **chronic neuropathic pain**.

INCIDENCE: 1/1800 patients with a female predominance.

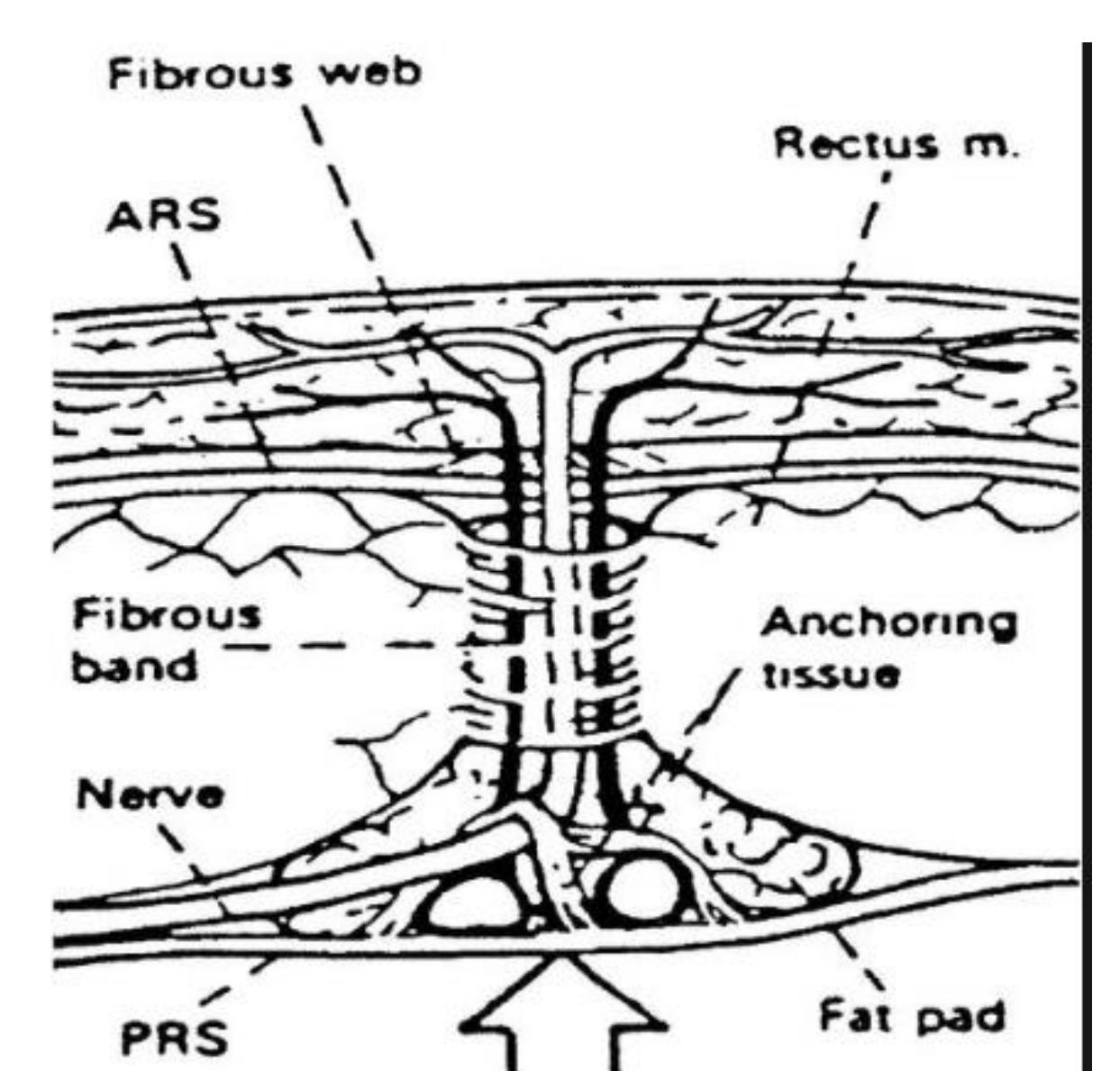
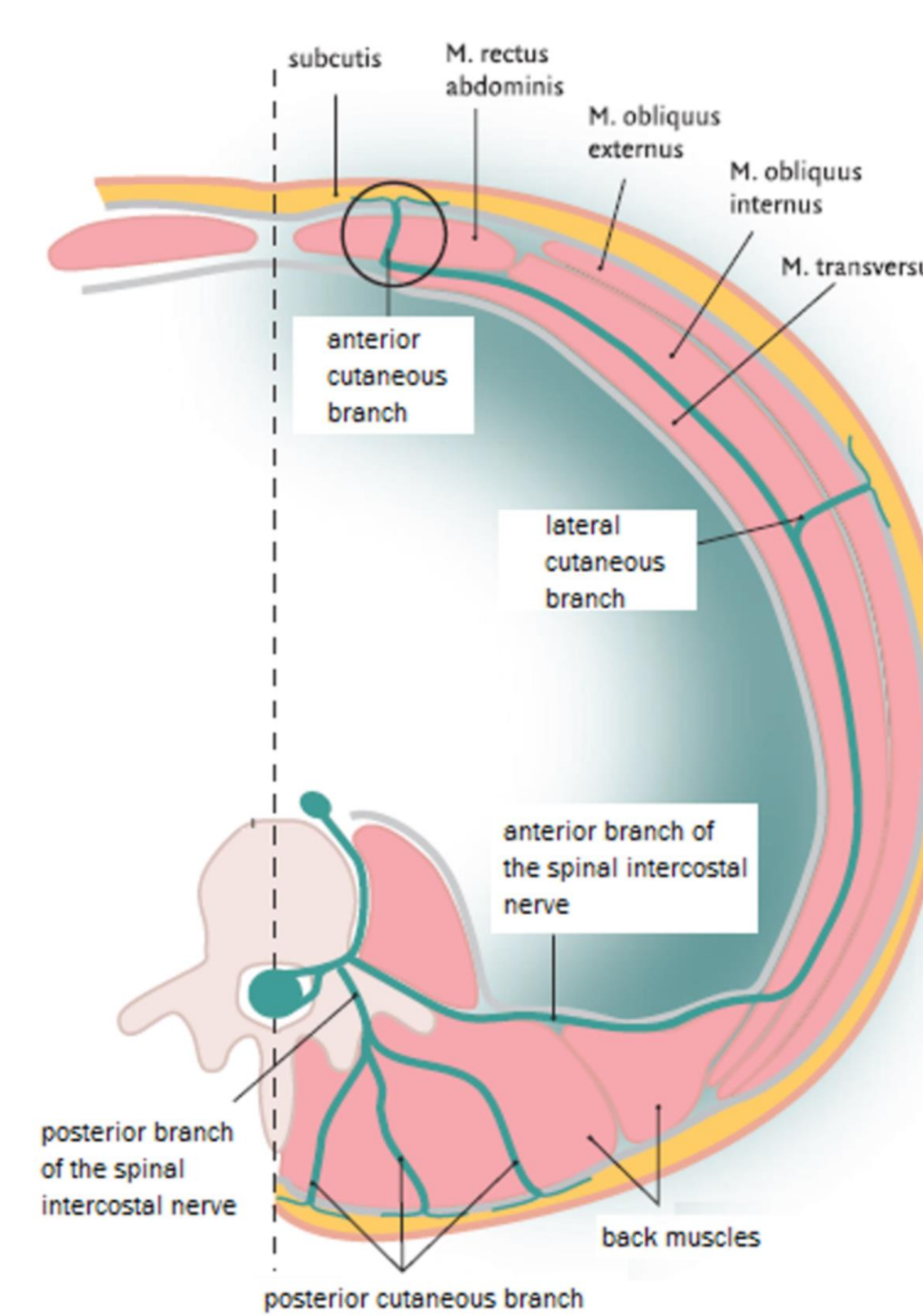
CLINICAL SIGNS

- **Pain**
 - **Very well localized**
 - Most frequently in the right lower quadrant but can be all over the abdomen.
 - **Positive Pinching test:** pain exacerbated by the pinching
 - **Positive Carnett's sign:** pain when contracting the abdominal muscles
 - Other physical signs: allodynia, hyper/hypoesthesia or hyperalgia.

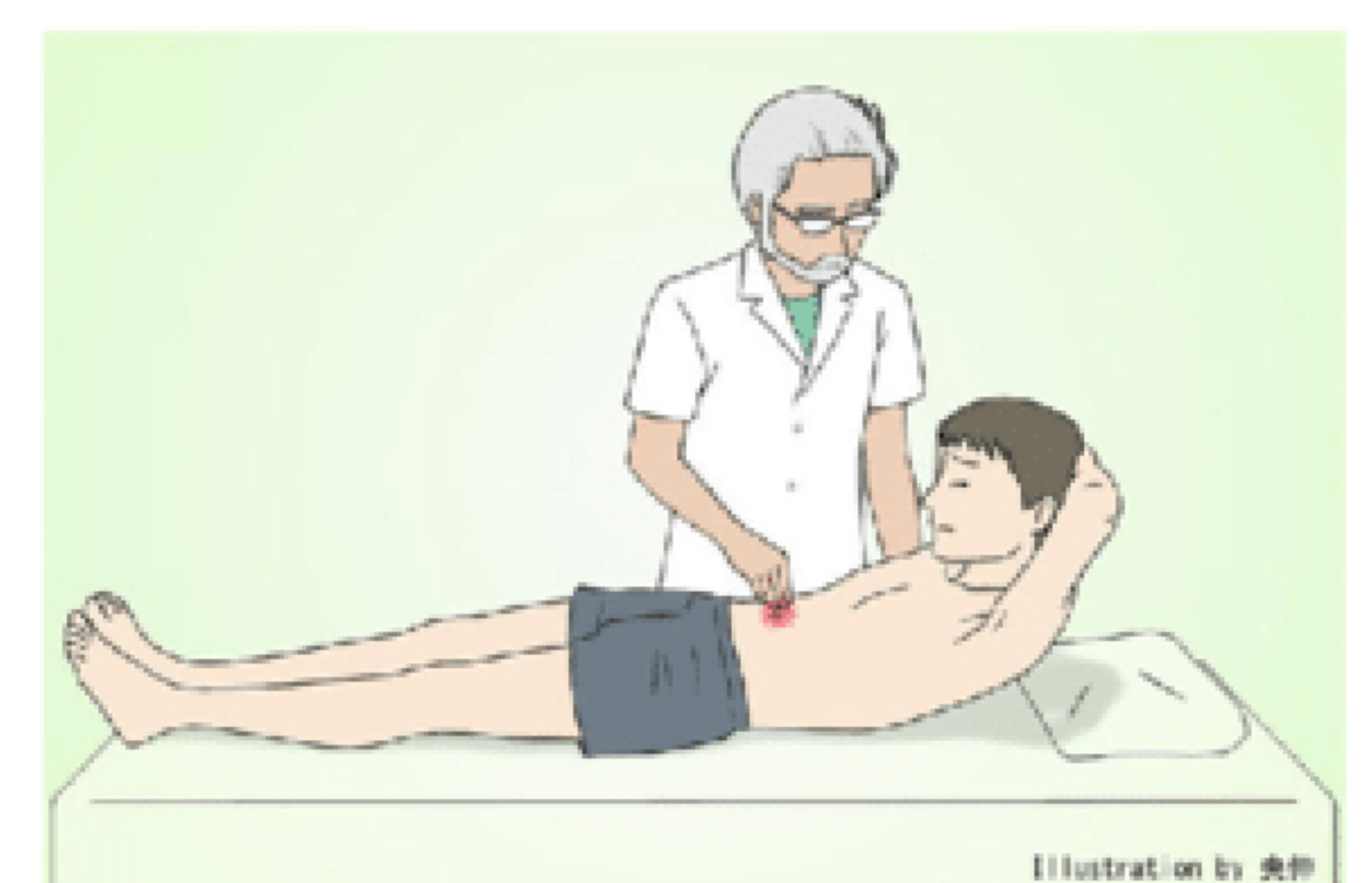
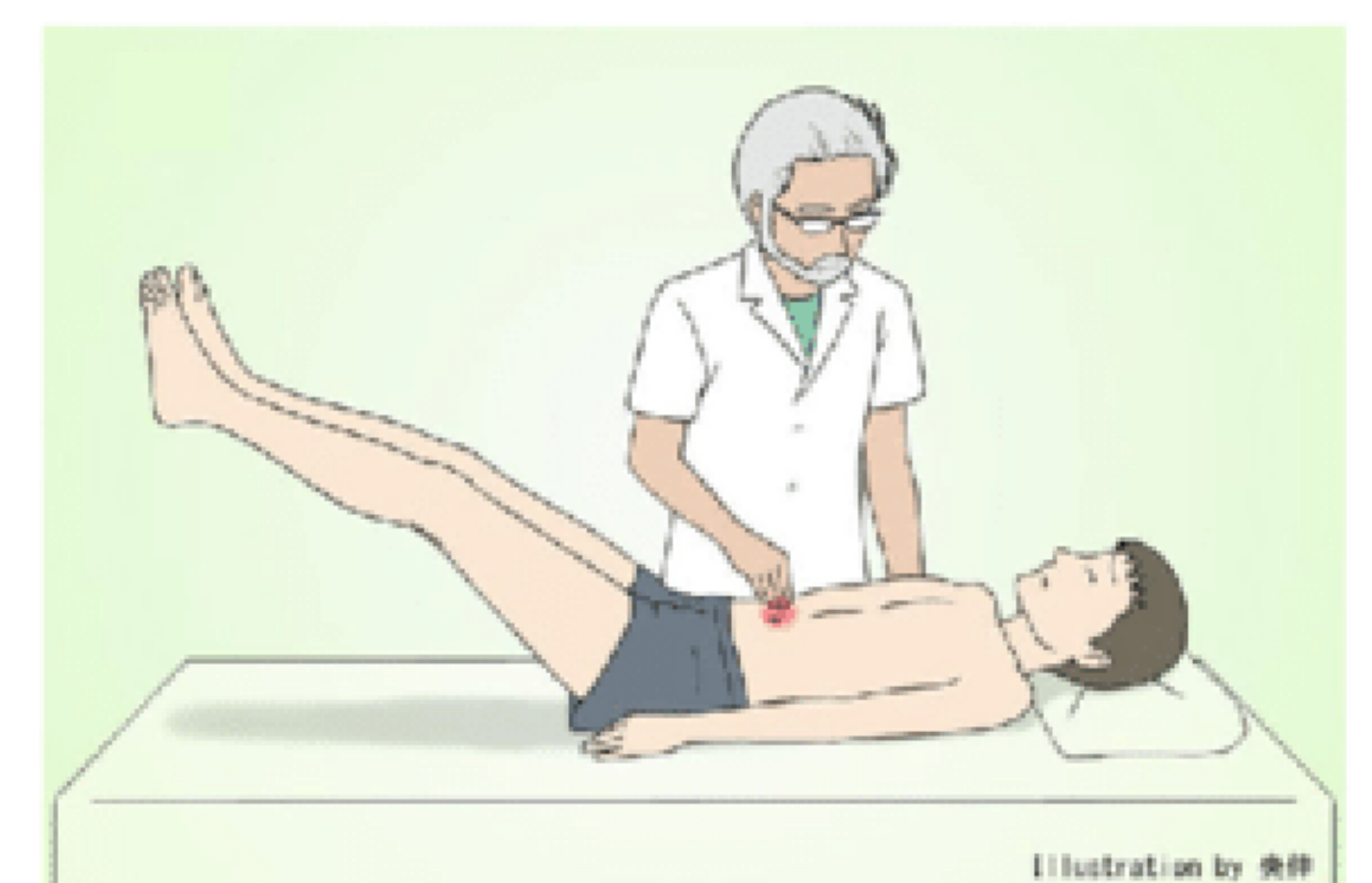
TREATMENT

- Lidocaine infiltration
- Neurectomy
- Pain management inbetween: TENS or Lidocain patch

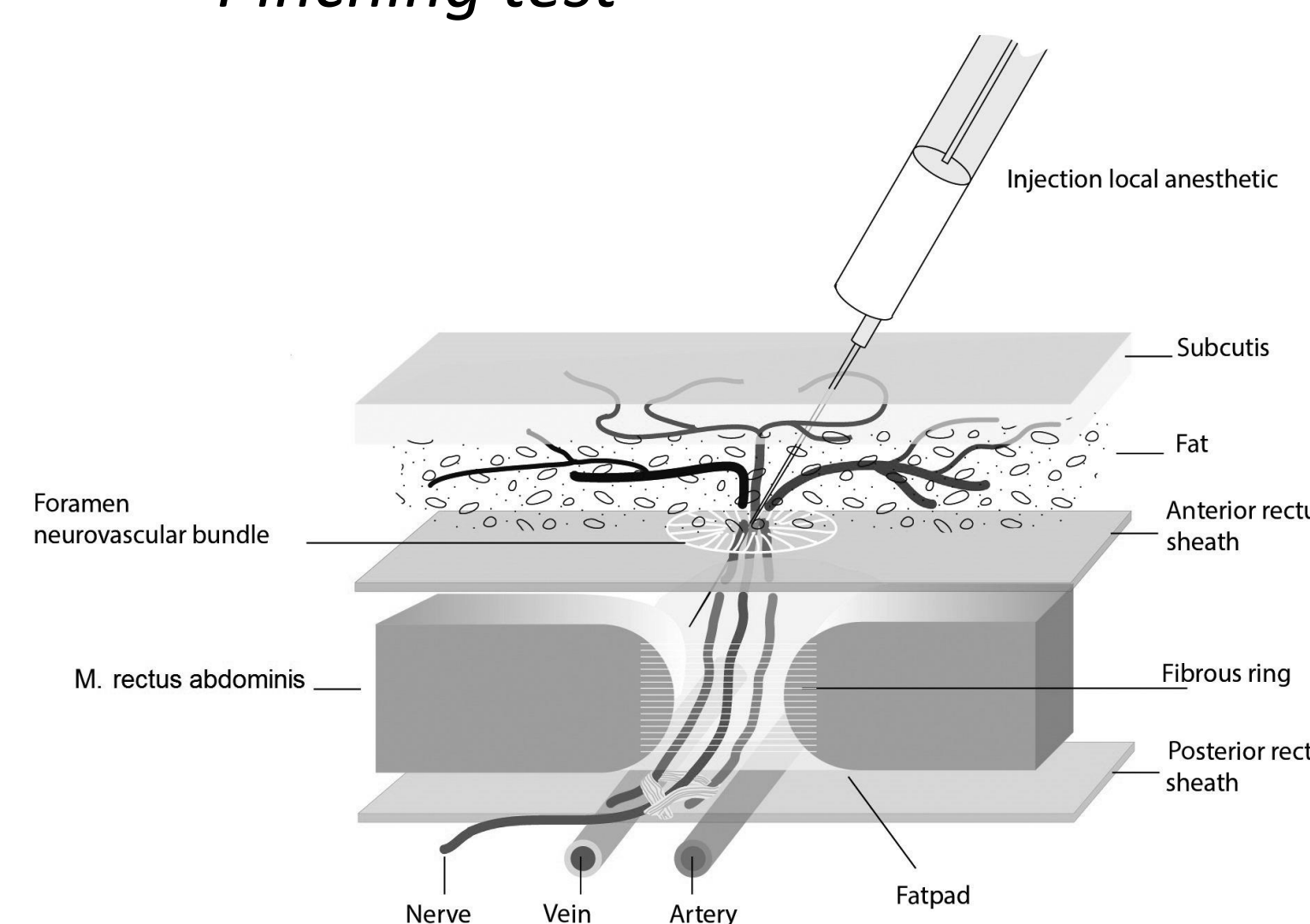
PROGNOSIS: **mostly favorable**. The pain is immediately relieved following a local infiltration which strengthen the diagnosis.



Pinching test



Carnett's sign



Lidocain infiltration

CONCLUSION

ACNES is underdiagnosed because neurogenic abdominal wall pain is not thought of. **The diagnosis is clinical !** Therefore typical physical signs must be sought.

